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Blunt, who is representing the House GOP leadership in the negotiations, said if no deal is reached by Sunday, it would delay getting anything done until Thursday or Friday.

"We're doing everything we can to have a bill the Democrats and Republicans can work for that protects taxpayers in ways that the original proposal didn't, and provide some alternatives out there that are better," Blunt told CBS.

The Senate Republicans' envoy to the negotiations, Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), said he and Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Chairman Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) agreed to press hard for a final deal.

"When we sit down, we agreed we are going to stay until we get this done," Gregg said of his conversation with Dodd.

Staff continued to meet to hash out language in the bill, with hopes that enough progress could be made for the principal negotiators to meet later today.

House Republicans have put down several markers, warning that they will not support a provision to give 20 percent of possible future profits to affordable housing programs, nor will they back anything that gives bankruptcy judges the ability to adjust mortgage terms; both

provisions have been sought by Democrats and were included in an earlier agreement reached by negotiators for House Democrats, Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans.

House Republicans also want some inclusion of a mortgage insurance program that would charge Wall Street firms that hold mortgage securities premiums to limit taxpayer exposure.

Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.), an early supporter of the bailout package and the mortgage insurance alternative, said late Friday that he could see a package emerge that spends less than the \$700 billion sought by Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson but implements the mortgage insurance program for a part of the less-toxic but still troubled assets known as "Alt-A" mortgages.

But Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) predicted that most House Republicans would ultimately support a \$700 billion package that included some House GOP provisions.

House Financial Services Chairman Barney Frank (D-Mass.) on Friday called the mortgage insurance idea "useless but not harmful," provided that it was merely listed as an option but not a mandate and not in lieu of the broader \$700 billion rescue package, which has as its core the purchase of toxic debt from financial institutions to unglue frozen credit markets.

And Frank dismissed the idea of Democrats going forward with the package without Republicans. "It could not be done," he said. "There's no shortcut here. The House Republicans have to be part of this bill or there won't be a bill."

Senate aides, meanwhile, said they expected the four principal negotiators from the House and Senate to meet sometime around 3 p.m. Saturday to discuss staff progress in writing the bill.

Gregg would not say when the meeting would occur, but said, "We're trying to let the staff do as much as they can so they can narrow the agenda." He added that he expects Paulson to attend any afternoon meeting, but Democratic aides said that may not happen.

"My view is we have to have it before the end of the weekend. We have to have it before the markets open on Monday," Gregg said. "We just have to have everybody in agreement as to what it's going to be. But I'd like to have the bill. I'd like to have it ready to vote on."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), however, held out the possibility that an agreement on the bailout could slip past Sunday.

"The goal is to try to come up with a final agreement by tomorrow. Now we may not be able to do that, but we're trying very hard," he said on the floor Saturday.